only road, he was prevented from doing so. Suppose the depressed class people want to do likewise in future also, and if they are prevented, will the Government come to their rescue ? "

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—" I am afraid that is a hypothetical question. I am not responsible for statements made outside this Council."

Mr. R. VEERIAN :—" May I know whether Government can interfere with the religious rites of Hindus, especially as this is a matter which concerns a festival ? "

Forests.

Panchayats for forest subordinates.

*302 *Q.*—Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR : Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the report called for by him from the Chief Conservator of Forests in connexion with interpellation No. 1273—vide Council Proceedings, dated 3rd December 1924—has been received ; and

(*b*) if so, whether he will be pleased to lay it on the table of the House ?

A.—(*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The Government do not propose to lay the report on the table. The information asked for by the hon. Member is appended.[a]

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR :—" With reference to the answer given in the latter portion of clause (*c*), may I know how and why it is not possible to bring under one control both village forest panchayats and class V panchayats ?

The hon. Sir. ARTHUR KNAPP :—" My hon. Friend's question is why the Forest department should not have control over the ordinary panchayats. The answer to that is that Government deliberately took away the ordinary panchayats from the control of the Forest officers and it was only the other day that I informed the House that this was done on account of the fact that this House and the people are said not to trust the Forest officers."

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR :—" If the work has been handed over to a special panchayat staff, is it not a fact that the ordinary staff would have consequently very much less work to do ? "

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—" I do not think that can yet be said. It is not a question of handing over certain work. This is entirely new work. In due course we expect as the result of the constitution of the forest panchayats to arrange for the abolition of a large number of forest divisions."

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR :—" I am told there are a large number of people who have no work."

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—" Such cases will be dealt with appropriately and any reduction that is possible will be made."

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[a] Printed as Appendix I on pages 780–781 infra.

4th March 1925]

Railways.

Progress of the Pollachi-Udamalpet line, etc.

* 303 *Q.*—Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR : With reference to the answers to clause (*c*) of question No. 1156 and to supplementary questions given on 13th November 1924, will the hon. the Home Member and the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government be pleased to state whether any progress has been made regarding the consideration of the proposals of the district board of Coimbatore about the Pollachi-Udamalpet line and Erode-Satyamangalam line ?

A.—*Pollachi-Udamalpet railway.*—The Railway Board are arranging to sanction the construction of the Dindigul-Pollachi line from Programme funds.

Erode-Satyamangalam railway.—The matter is now under correspondence with the District Board.

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—" As regards the first, viz., Udamalpet-Pollachi line, may I know if the Government have received any offer from the Railway Board to acquire the line for the South Indian Railway Company ? "

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—" I do not think the Government have received any definite offer."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—" If the hon. Member had read the newspapers he would have found that the South Indian Railway Company through the intervention of this Government had offered to take over the construction of Pollachi-Udamalpet line."

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—" I take no responsibility for statements made outside this Council."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—" Anyhow as regards the second, may I request the hon. the Home Member to keep this matter also pending and after the correspondence is over to give me an answer ? "

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—" I am not sure if there is anything more for me to answer ".

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—" In the answer it is stated that the matter is under consideration. I wanted to request the hon. the Home Member to try and keep this matter pending ? "

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—" I am afraid we cannot keep the matter pending. If the hon. Member wants further information he can ask for it."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—" I specially referred to the correspondence with the Board and asked whether any progress has been made. The answer is the matter is under correspondence. What I asked was whether any progress has been made as a result of that correspondence."

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—" I do not think my hon. Friend is putting any new question."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—" May I remind the hon. the Home Member of the elaborate statement made by Sir Charles Innes—I speak from memory—in which he stated that the proposals to acquire the District Board Railways